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FM AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 2710
INFO RUEHPH/CDC ATLANTA GA
RUEAUSA/DEPT OF HHS WASHINGTON DC
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 1716
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC
RUEHRC/DEPT OF AGRICULTURE WASHINGTON DC
RUCNASE/ASEAN MEMBER COLLECTIVE
RUEHZN/ENVIRONMENT SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY COLLECTIVE

UNCLAS KUALA LUMPUR 000362

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

STATE FOR CA/OCS/EAP
STATE FOR M/PRI FOR RMORRITZ
STATE FOR S/ES-O/CMS FOR EPARRA
STATE FOR EAP/MTS FOR DBISCHOF
STATE FOR OES/AIAG FOR AMBASSADOR LOFTIS, DWINN AND
CPATTERSON
STATE FOR REO/BKK FOR HHOWARD
STATE FOR OES/IHB, AAIT, MED
HHS FOR OGHA STEIGER AND HICKEY
CDC ATLANTA FOR CCID AND COGH
USDA FOR APHIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

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PINR, AMGT, TF, MY
SUBJECT: TFFLU01: MALAYSIA H1N1 UPDATE - MAY 13, 2009

11. (SBU) SUMMARY: Malaysia has no reported human H1N1 cases. Two confirmed cases in neighboring Thailand have led to increased surveillance. The Malaysian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) issued a more specific travel advisory, which again recommends against all non-essential travel to the U.S. but adds that all travel to heavily affected regions like Illinois, Wisconsin, and California should be deferred. Post continued its efforts to persuade the Government of Malaysia (GOM) to lift its freeze on pork imports (see septel). END SUMMARY.

H1N1 Screening and Testing

12. (SBU) Thermal screening has increased with the installation of new thermal imagers. There are now 11 thermal scanners at six ports of entry: Kuala Lumpur International Airport, the Kuala Lumpur Low Cost Carrier Terminal, the Kota Kinabalu International Airport, the Bayan Lepas International Airport in Penang, Kuching International Airport in Sarawak and Senai International Airport, Johor. Approximately 6,000 passengers are being screened each day at these airports with another 100 to 300 travelers being manually screened at land and sea ports of entry. Passengers showing influenza-like illness symptoms continue to be referred to one of 28 Ministry of Health (MOH) hospitals for testing. So far, all cases have returned a negative result from the rapid testing. No samples were sent to the WHO reference lab in Melbourne for further testing.

13. (SBU) MedOff reports cases of seasonal influenza. All cases have been confirmed negative for H1N1. Seasonal Influenza A is anecdotally widespread in Malaysia and Singapore but exact numbers are not tracked. Unfortunately, most local hospitals do not have samples for annual influenza. As such, all cases that meet the case definition must be sent to the MOH hospital for further testing.

Travel Warning

14. (SBU) The MFA travel advisory issued on May 12 is more specific than the last advisory issued on April 27. This advisory recommends travelers defer all non-essential trips to the U.S., Mexico, Canada,

Spain, and the United Kingdom on the basis that "96.8 percent of the reported cases hail from the five countries." The advisory goes a step further and recommends travelers defer any trips to heavily hit places, specifically naming only three locations: Illinois, Wisconsin, and California. The advisory remains voluntary and was ironically issued by MFA on the same day that the local media is reporting Minister of Foreign Affairs Anifah Aman will travel to the U.S. on May 14.

Pork Import Freeze

15. (SBU) FAS Attache met with officials from the Ministry of Agriculture and Agro-based Industries (MOA) and the Department of Veterinary Services on May 11 to discuss the current import freeze on pork products. These officials admitted that the decision to freeze pork imports was not based on a sound scientific rationale, but said that it was a necessary and temporary step to allay fears in society and stave off calls for more drastic measures. The GOM is conducting an extensive surveillance of all local pig farms and is unlikely to consider lifting the freeze until that exercise is completed in one or two weeks time. Post will continue to engage GOM authorities on the pork freeze issue.

KEITH